DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 271 928 EC 190 237

AUTHOR	Nelson, Lynda A.; And Others
TITLE	A Handbook for Volunteers.
INSTITUTION	East Carolina Univ., Greenville, N.C.
SPONS AGENCY	Special Education Programs (ED/OSERS), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	May 86
GRANT	G008302282
NOTE	18p.; For related information, see EC 190 236.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Disabilities; Preschool Education; Program Development; Role Perception; Staff Role; Teaching Methods; *Volunteers
IDENTIFIERS	*Volunteers in Partnership with Parents

ABSTRACT

The handbook was developed by the staff of the Volunteers in Partnership with Parents Project (VIPP) and is intended for volunteers in the VIPP program in which people are trained to offer support and caregiving assistance to parents of young handicapped children. The partner's roles and responsibilities with parents are listed as well as those for volunteers in developmental day care centers. Following a review of general rights and responsibilities of volunteers, the booklet examines confidentiality and suggests helpful ways to respond to a young child. (CL)

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A HANDBOOK FOR VOLUNTEERS

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VOLUNTEERS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS STAFF

Lynda Nelson	Director
Debi Rogers	Head Teacher
Cynthia Rodgers	Educational/Developmental Aide
Phyllis Thomas	Parent/Volunteer Coordinator
Gayle Lewis	Secretary

The entire staff contributed to the development and writing of this handbook.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have helped create this handbook. Sincere thanks goes to previous project staff members including Donna White, Sheila Bazemore, Nancy Moore, and Nancy Bennett. We would also like to thank Renée Thomas for her assistance with the design work and illustration of the handbook. We would like to acknowledge the assistance of Gayle Lewis for her patience in typing.

This handbook was prepared pursuant to Grant Number G008302282 from the Office of Special Education Programs, U. S. Department of Education. Contractees undertaking such projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their judgement in professional and technical matters. Points of view or opinions, therefore, do not necessarily represent the Department of Education's position or policy. The contents of this book are presented for information purposes only; no endorsement is made.

Prepared by the Volunteers In Partnership With Parents Project Staff: Lynda Nelson, Phyllis Thomas, Deborah Rogers, Cynthia Rodgers, Gayle Lewis. East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina 27834

May 1986

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FORWARD

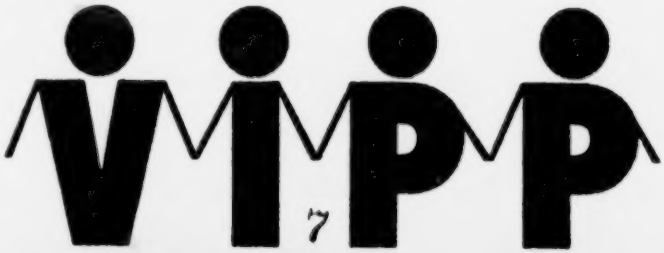
The VIPP Staff is happy to provide you with this Handbook for Volunteers in hopes that you will find it to be a useful source of information to supplement your orientation to the VIPP Program. Whether you donate your time as a classroom volunteer or a volunteer partner, your orientation will consist of meeting with the Parent Volunteer Coordinator, viewing a slide presentation on the VIPP Program, observing in the classroom, and discussing with the VIPP Staff any questions you may have.

As you become more knowledgeable about VIPP, you will begin to understand why volunteers are such an important part of the program. The VIPP Staff would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your interest in volunteering in the VIPP Program.

WHAT IS VIPP?

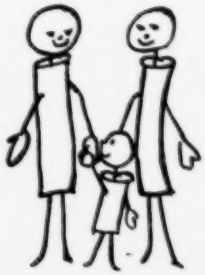
Volunteers In Partnership With Parents, VIPP, is an early intervention program for special needs infants and preschool children. The VIPP staff believes that volunteers who are willing to learn about child development and caring for a special child are necessary for the success of the VIPP Programs.

Parenting any young child is demanding. But a parent of a young child who has a significant developmental delay must find and use all available resources to help meet the family's needs. These resources include volunteers such as friends, neighbors, relatives, and other caring persons from the community. They can all be a help to the parents and to VIPP staff. A volunteer can provide parents with needed emotional support--that is, to be someone who will listen and try to understand the feelings parents are experiencing.



A VIPP volunteer can work specifically with one family as a volunteer partner. With the help of VIPP staff, a Parent Partner Plan is developed after the parents' needs are carefully assessed. The volunteer partner agrees to accept responsibility in helping the parents reach their Plan's goals.

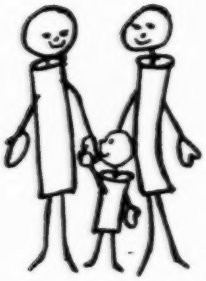
Sometimes a person prefers to volunteer their time and talents by assisting the VIPP staff in the operation of the developmental day care program. In either role, as a volunteer partner to a parent, or a volunteer at the day care center, volunteers make a difference to special needs children and their parents.



WHY BE A VIPP VOLUNTEER?

The anticipated benefit to becoming a volunteer for any organization is the joy and satisfaction that you feel from knowing that you are helping others. But there are also other rewards you will receive from being a volunteer. These are more tangible or real benefits. You will be learning new job-related skills in the fields of child care and special education that could help you in future employment; you will have the opportunity to learn about the families in your community with special needs children; and in some instances, colleges and schools will award credits for learning through non-academic experiences.

Besides the assistance you provide VIPP staff with your volunteer service, there are other ways you help. The hours that you volunteer can be counted as an in-kind contribution when applying for new grants and funds. And the number of hours that volunteers give to an agency often show the impact of its programs on the community.



THE VOLUNTEER PARTNER

The Partner's Role

1. May be a relative, (other than spouse) neighbor, or close family friend willing to be paired with each parent or set of parents of a child enrolled in the VIPP Programs.
2. Is available to the parent(s) of a special needs child to learn ways to provide skilled care for that child.
3. Is available to be a supportive friend to that family or to the parent.

The Partner's Responsibilities

1. Develop with the parent(s) a mutually agreed upon plan of goals and activities to address specific needs of the child and family. This plan is called the Parent/Partner Plan.
2. Help carry out the activities specified in the Parent/Partner Plan which may involve receiving training or instruction from VIPP staff about caring for a young handicapped infant or child.
3. Attend the monthly Parent/Partner meetings to learn information about special children and to share concerns and experiences with other individuals in caring for a special child.

The Partner's Requirements

1. Willingness to help out.
2. Concern for others.
3. Love of children.

VOLUNTEERS FOR DEVELOPMENTAL DAY CARE CENTER

The Day Care Volunteer's Role

1. May be anyone who has the desire and physical stamina to work with special needs children.
2. Is able to communicate with children and staff.

The Day Care Volunteer's Responsibilities

Assist child caregivers in the daily operation of the developmental day care program which may include assistance with:

1. The kitchen for meal preparations and cleanup.
2. Self-help, feeding, and toileting skills with the children.
3. Recreational and therapeutic exercises and activities for the children.

The Day Care Volunteer's Requirements

1. Basic knowledge of child development.
2. Ability to follow directions.
3. Willingness to learn.

RIGHTS OF A VOLUNTEER

Most agencies recognize that their volunteers have rights. A VIPP volunteer can expect to have the following rights.

- The right to training for the job - thoughtfully planned and effectively presented.
- The right to know as much about VIPP as possible, its policies, its people, and its programs.
- The right to guidance and direction by someone who is experienced, well-informed, patient, thoughtful, and who takes time to give needed guidance.
- The right to express a need to change volunteer activities, if so desired.
- The right to be heard. The right to have a part in planning, to feel free to make suggestions and to have respect shown for an honest opinion.
- The right to recognition in day-to-day expressions of appreciation.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A VOLUNTEER

The following responsibilities are expected from all VIPP volunteers.

- Be loyal to the VIPP Programs. Offer suggestions when you feel there are better ways of doing things.
- Ask about things you don't understand. Feel free to discuss your feelings with VIPP staff about any concerns regarding your work at VIPP.
- Be willing to learn. Training is essential to any job well done.
- Welcome supervision. You will do a better job and enjoy it more if you are doing what is expected of you.
- Be dependable. Do what you have agreed to do. If you can't keep a commitment, then tell VIPP staff so other plans can be made.
- Respect the children and parents you are helping. Look into your heart and know that you really want to help other people.

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

To work effectively with the children and their families, it is often necessary to read and/or discuss confidential information. All VIPP volunteers, like the staff, are expected to respect this personal information by keeping it to themselves or limiting the discussion among staff. All staff and volunteers must be careful to protect the rights and privacy of the children and their families.

Developmental day care volunteers are required to sign a confidentiality statement before being assigned work in the day care center.

HELPFUL WAYS TO RESPOND TO A YOUNG CHILD

- When giving directions/suggestions, state them in the positive. (Avoid using "No and Don't".)
- Give directions in short, simple, one-step commands. ("You may play on this side of the fence." "Hang your coat here.")
- Substitute a toy or an activity when one must have something taken away or denied a child.
- Give the child a choice only when intended to let the child follow his choice.
- Redirect an aggressive behavior to a quiet directed activity to prevent trouble.
- Explain results rather than use threats. ("When you hit someone you could hurt him." "A block is hard and it hurts to be hit with it.")

- Use reminders rather than questions if child gets defensive. ("You forgot your coat, I'll wait for you to get it.")
- When a child has no choice but to follow directions, be positive and expect the child to follow the directions. ("We are going inside now." "I will wait for you to get out of the sand box." "If you cannot come in alone, I will have to help you.")
- When speaking to a child, get the child's attention first, stoop to his level, and stay in close physical proximity.
- Limit conversation in the classrooms to children or VIPP-related activities.
- When using verbal praise, use labels. ("Good sitting, Johnny.")

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Classroom Hours . . . . Monday - Friday
9:00 - 2:30

Center Hours . . . . . Monday - Friday
8:00 - 5:00

Address . . . . . VIPP Project
210 West Liberty St.
Williamston, NC
27892

Phone Number 792-6989
(If I should need to
cancel my volunteer
assignment)